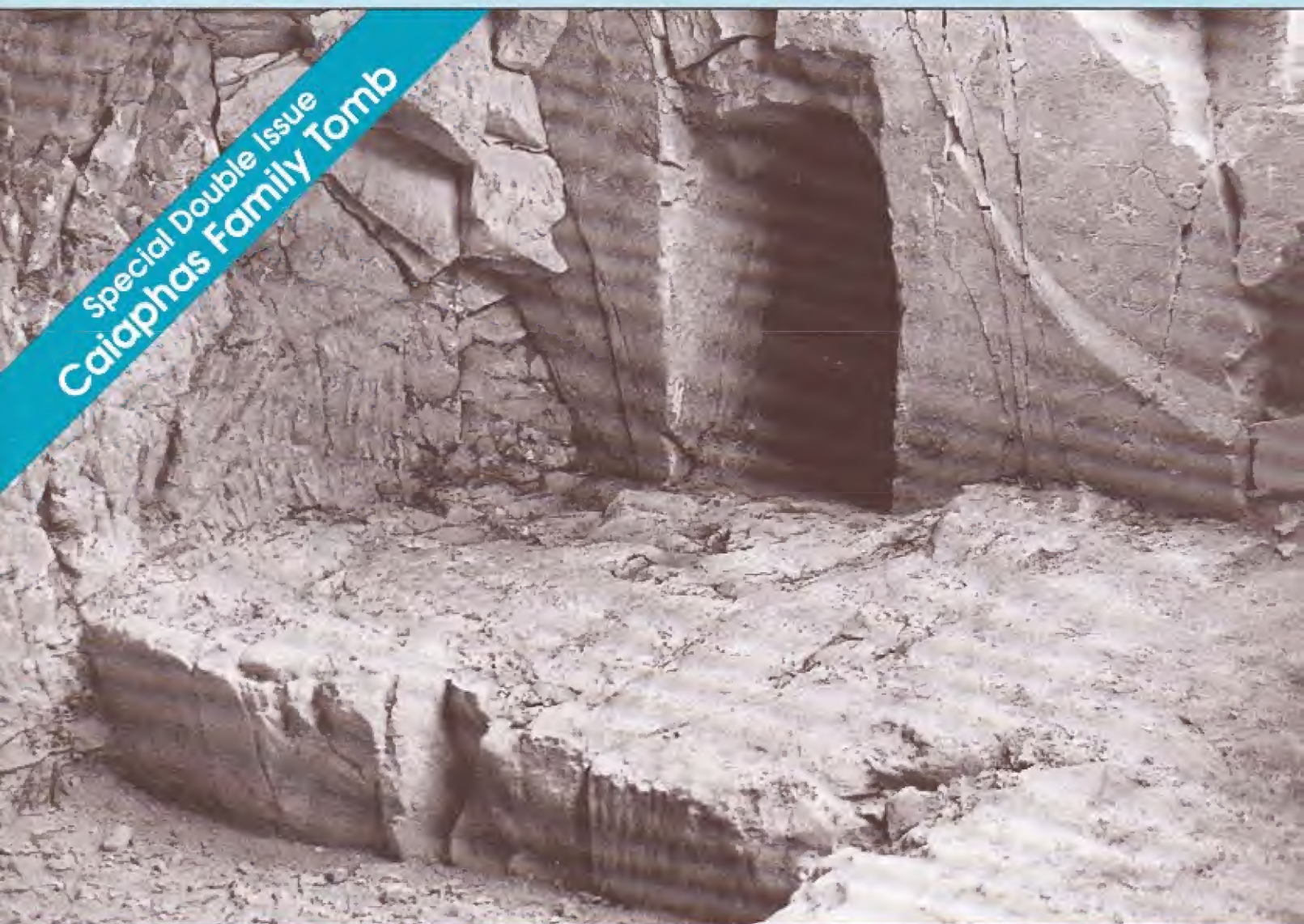


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מנקודת ראות ירושלמית

Jerusalem Perspective

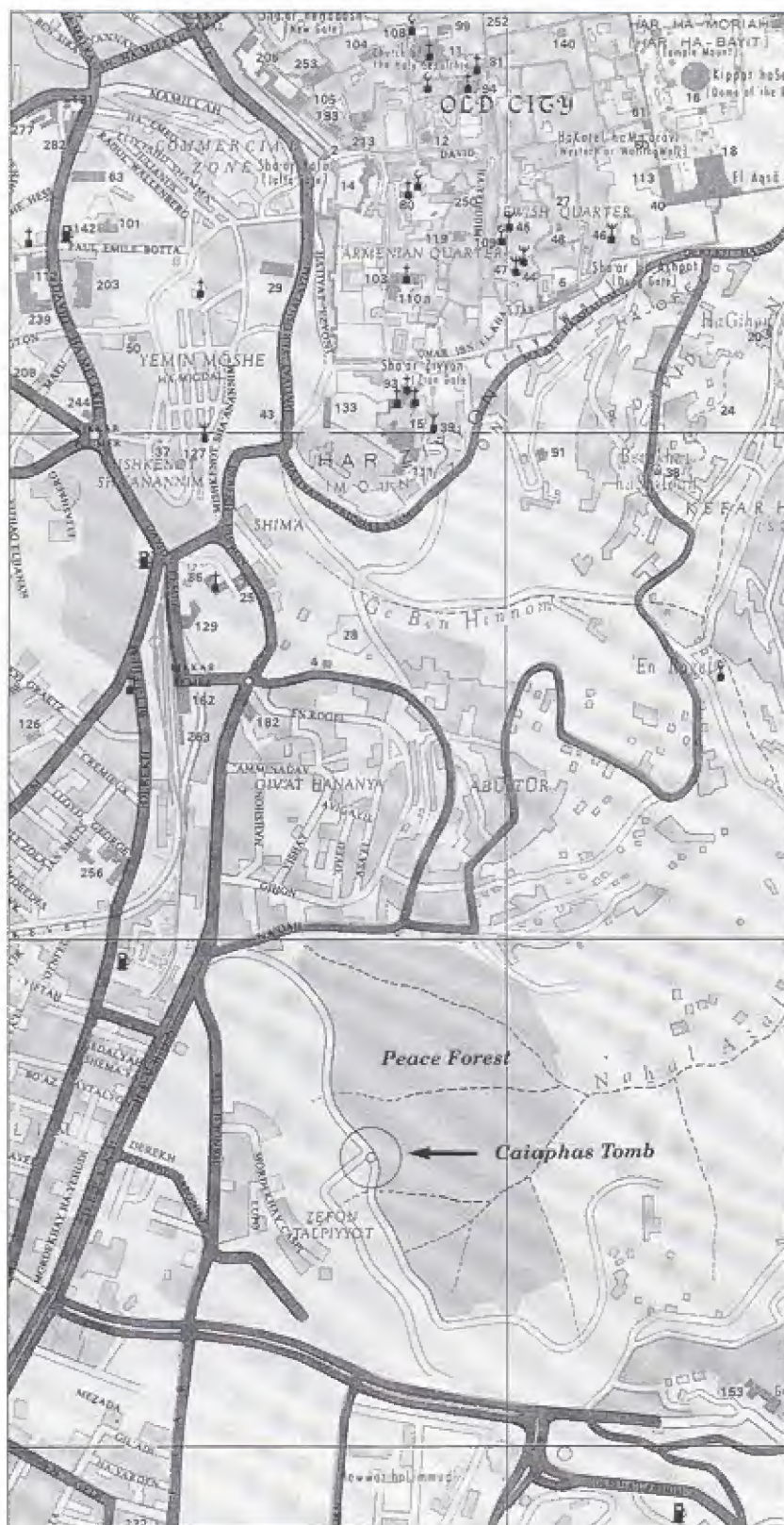
Exploring the Hebraic Background to the Life and Words of Jesus



Special Double Issue
Caiaphas Family Tomb

Zvi Greenhut **Discovery of the Caiaphas Family Tomb**
Ronny Reich **Ossuary Inscriptions from the Caiaphas Tomb**
David Flusser **...To Bury Caiaphas, Not to Praise Him**

Perspective on the Caiaphas Tomb



At the end of December, 1990, one of the most significant New Testament-related archaeological discoveries ever made came to light in Jerusalem. Park construction workers accidentally exposed a Second Temple period tomb, which archaeologist Zvi Greenhut of the Israel Antiquities Authority was called to excavate. Some of the ossuaries found in the tomb were inscribed with the name “Caiaphas,” and it soon became clear that this was a tomb belonging to the Caiaphas family. Inside a magnificently decorated ossuary inscribed with the name Joseph bar Caiaphas were bones of a 60-year-old male. These are almost certainly the remains of the high priest mentioned in the New Testament and referred to by Josephus as “Joseph surnamed Caiaphas.”

JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE has been given the unique opportunity to publish the first comprehensive description and discussion of this archaeological discovery. The official publication of the discovery will appear in the forthcoming *Atiqot XXI* (see announcement on page 31). Because of the find's significance to New Testament research and the life of Jesus, the Antiquities Authority has generously allowed JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE to present its readers with a preliminary report of this exciting discovery in advance of its formal publication.

The goal of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE is to report on current research affecting the Gospels and the New Testament. Few discoveries could be more relevant to New Testament research than what is presented in the pages of this issue: the tomb of Caiaphas, high priest in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death. If indeed this tomb can be attributed to the Caiaphas mentioned in the New Testament and Josephus, we have before us the remains of the most important Second Temple period Jewish personality ever discovered. Because of the new information provided by this exciting discovery concerning Caiaphas, his family and the times in which he lived, we have decided to devote an entire double issue of *JP* to the Caiaphas tomb.

Map of the southeastern part of Jerusalem showing where the Caiaphas tomb was found.
(Copyright © 1987 by the Survey of Israel)



Archaeologist **Zvi Greenhut's** account of discovering the Caiaphas family tomb provides the cornerstone for this issue of **JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE**. Greenhut is a graduate of the Hebrew University with majors in

archaeology and geography. He is currently completing an M.A. at the University of Tel-Aviv in archaeology. Greenhut has participated in the excavations at Tel Dor, Tel Jokneam and Manahath in Jerusalem, and led excavations at Hurvat Hermeshit and tombs near the Akeldama Monastery, and in the Tel Arza neighborhood in Jerusalem. He serves as Jerusalem District Archaeologist for the Israel Antiquities Authority.

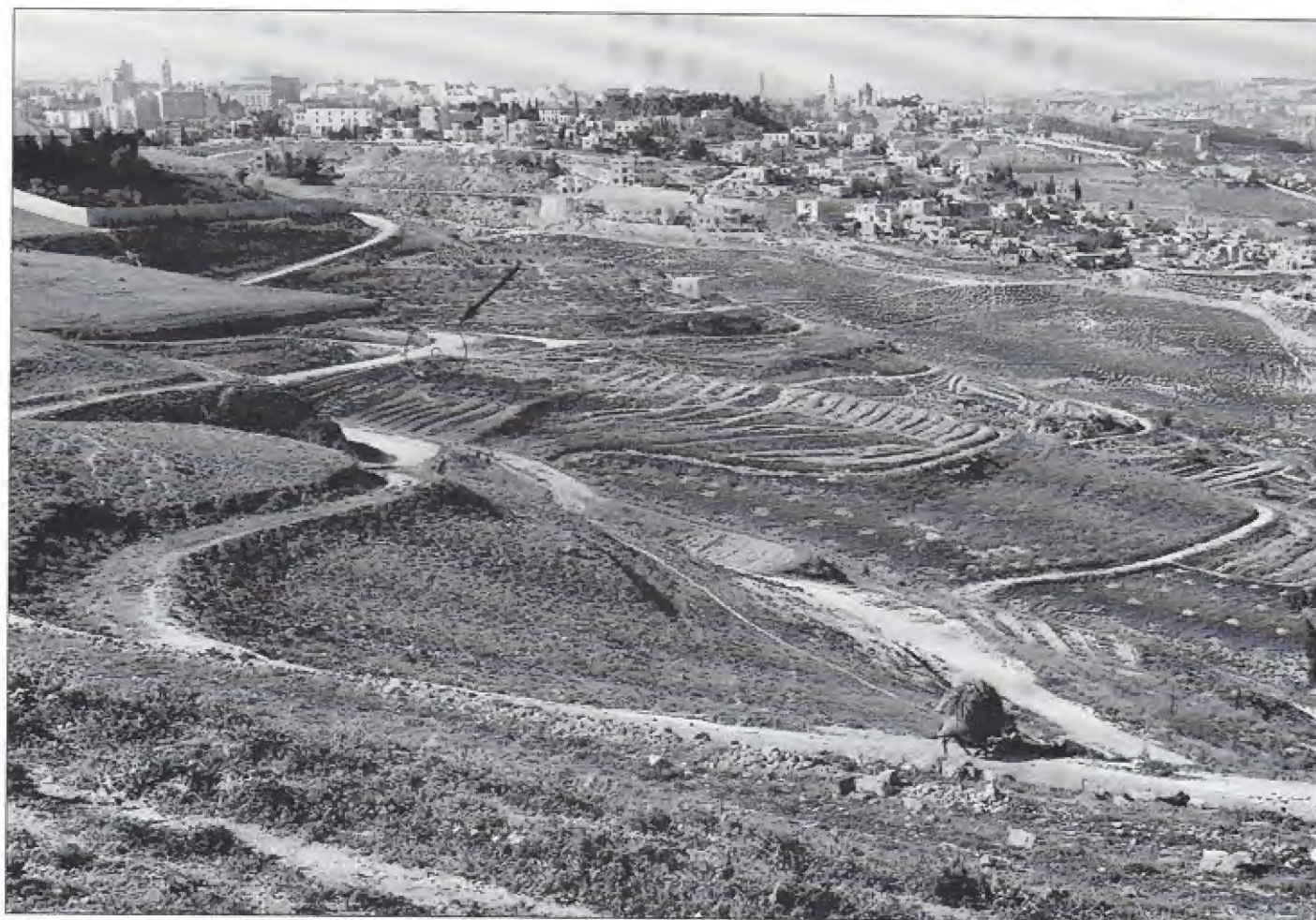
Greenhut prepared for publication the scholarly legacy of the late Pesah Bar-Adon from Bar-Adon's excavations around the Dead Sea and in the Judean Desert (published in *'Atiqot* 9 [Hebrew Series]). He also published notes on excavations in Jerusalem and in Hurvat Hermeshit in the Israeli journal *הרשות ארכיאולוגית* (*Archaeological News*). The final publication of his article concerning the tomb discussed in this issue of **JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE** will appear in *'Atiqot* XXI (English series).

Ronny Reich, an archaeologist and epigrapher, not only contributes an article concerning the important inscriptions found in the Caiaphas tomb,



Aerial view of the same area of Jerusalem shown in the map opposite, looking south toward site of tomb.
(Courtesy of the Israel Government Press Office)





Looking north toward Jerusalem from the Hill of Evil Counsel near Government House (U.N. Headquarters).

This photograph was taken in April, 1971, before the Peace Forest was planted. The spot on the dirt road where the Caiaphas tomb was accidentally struck by construction equipment is marked.

(Courtesy of the Israel Government Press Office)

but also offers a brief discussion of Jewish burial customs and the handling of human bones. Reich is in charge of documentation (archives, library and computer database) at the Israel Antiquities Authority.

He acquired his archaeological education in the Department of Archaeology of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. From 1969 to 1978 he was assistant to Prof. Nahman Avigad at the excavations in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem, where he served as area supervisor as well as carrying out all the surveying and drawing of architectural remains found in the excavations. He currently leads the excavations in the Mamillah district near Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem.

In his studies Reich specialized in Assyrian architecture and its influence on the architecture of the land of Israel during the eighth–sixth centuries B.C., publishing several original articles on this subject. He later turned to the study of domestic architecture of the Second Temple period, concentrating particularly on Jewish *mikvaot* (ritual immersion baths).

He is now completing his Ph.D. thesis on *mikvaot* from their origin in the second century B.C. to the end of the Byzantine period.

JP asked Jerusalem School member and regular *JP* contributor Prof. David Flusser, an expert on the Sadducees and the high priestly families active in the time of Jesus, to contribute an article on the figure of Caiaphas and the part he played in the drama of Jesus' last days. A more technical form of this article will appear in *'Atiqot* XXI.



David Flusser is professor of Early Christianity and Judaism of the Second Temple Period at the Hebrew University. An internationally distinguished Bible scholar, he is noted for his work on the

Dead Sea Scrolls, the Essenes, and first-century Judaism. Flusser is a member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities,

and his publications include *Jesus* (1968) and *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (1988). He was awarded the Israel Prize in 1980 by the State of Israel for his work.

Despite the fact that bones play a special role in this issue of *JP*, we have provided no photographs of them, and this needs a word of explanation. Pieces of the bones of sixty-three different persons were found in the Caiaphas family tomb, yet as Israel Antiquities Authority anthropologist Joe Zias explains, they were in such a poor state of preservation that no measurements could be taken nor were photographs feasible. Not one complete skull or adult long bone was found — most of the bones were fragmented or had disintegrated completely. Unfortunately this is not uncommon in tombs in Israel's damp hill country.

The discovery of the Caiaphas family tomb opens a new era in the study of the party of the Sadducees in general, and those few high priestly families who held the reins of power in the time of Jesus in particular. We hope that this issue of *JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE* will make a contribution to that study. One of the advantages of living in Israel and publishing our magazine here is that we are

on the scene to bring you the latest discoveries in fields that relate to the life and words of Jesus. We look forward to further fruitful cooperation with the Israel

Antiquities Authority whenever finds come to light that have a bearing on Jesus and his times.

For the sake of clarity, all measurements in this issue are given in the metric units used by the archaeologists whose research we are presenting. All photographs are

by courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority, except where otherwise noted.

Postscript: Caiaphas' Final Resting Place

Joe Zias, together with his assistant Tzipporah Kahana, carried out all the anthropological studies on the human remains found in the Caiaphas tomb. After they finished their analysis, these remains were turned over, as is customary, to the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs who had them reburied in the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives where there are special graves for Jewish, non-Jewish and unidentifiable human remains unearthed by archaeologists. **JP**

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Publisher David Bivin

Editor Jeffrey Magnuson

Contributing Editor David Pileggi

Design Jeffrey Magnuson

Design Consultants Yael Avi-Yonah Goldfarb, Richard Sears

Artwork Phil Crossman, Margaret Dickinson, Yael Avi-Yonah Goldfarb

Contributors

David Flusser, Robert L. Lindsey, Shmuel Safrai, David Bivin, Randall J. Buth, R. Steven Notley, Mendel Nun, Waverly Nunnally,

Ray Pritz, Halvor Ronning, Marvin R. Wilson

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P.O. Box 31820
91317 Jerusalem
Israel

Cover photo:
*The entrance of
Locus IV within
the Caiaphas tomb.
In the lower left
foreground part
of the standing
pit is visible.*

Discovery of the Caiaphas Family Tomb

by Zvi Greenhut

*The Joseph bar
Caiaphas ossuary
(number 6) on the
left, and the Shalom
ossuary (number 5)
as they were found
in Loculus IV.*

Many archaeological finds in Israel result from the chance uncovering of various ancient remains during the course of construction work. Some of these fortuitous discoveries prove to be of great importance for understanding the history and archaeology of the land of Israel.

One such find is a Second Temple period burial cave which was discovered in December, 1990, in the Peace Forest near the North Talpiyyot neighborhood of Jerusalem during the development of a park by the Jerusalem Fund. The contents of this burial cave added new and important data to the corpus of Second Temple period ossuary inscriptions, and to our knowledge of burial customs of that period.

The Discovery

The construction superintendent reported the find to the Antiquities Authority after part of the tomb's roof had collapsed and revealed the burial cave. When I arrived at the site, I found a rock-hewn loculi burial cave, the type of tomb that is typical of the Second Temple period in Jerusalem. The cave is located in an area in which scores of other such tombs have been discovered, all part of the Jerusalem necropolis which stretches southward as far as the vicinity of the Arab village of Şur Bahir.

The limestone bedrock into which the cave is hewn is soft and crumbly and full of cracks, very characteristic of the area. The cave has an irregular floor plan, and its entrance

is on the east side. We reached the entrance from within the burial chamber, entering the tomb through what had been the roof. It was difficult to determine whether the entrance had been blocked by natural causes or was done intentionally. Judging from the tomb's simple plan, one can assume that the entrance led outside to a vestibule or courtyard, and that the tomb had no other burial chambers.

Digging in the fill that had accumulated in the cave, we found at the foot of the entrance a rectangular pit whose function was to allow those engaged in the task of burial to stand upright. Adjacent to this was another shallow pit hewn in the floor of the tomb which served as a repository for bones. These two elements are characteristic of Second Temple period burial caves in Jerusalem.

The tomb includes four loculi or burial recesses: three in the west wall opposite the entrance and one in the south wall. In the center of the room we discovered four unbroken ossuaries (numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4) which, from their position, seemed not to be *in situ*. Some of the ossuaries were found on their sides, and a few were lying on the stone slabs that originally covered the openings of the loculi. It is clear that these ossuaries had once been inside the loculi but were later removed, probably by grave robbers.

Two additional unbroken ossuaries (numbers 5 and 6) were discovered *in situ* side by side within the southern loculus. These had either evaded the notice of the grave robbers, or for some other reason had not been moved by them. Pieces of other ossuaries, pottery fragments and a jumble of bones were found in the fill of the standing pit, providing further evidence that the tomb had been disturbed after its first stage of use. Six more ossuaries were restored from fragments found in the tomb, making a total of twelve, all carved from limestone.

On the basis of the small number of loculi and the relatively large number of ossuaries, it appears that the tomb belonged to a small family and was in use for a fairly long period of time.

Pagan Custom

An additional find corroborates the dating of the tomb and contributes to our understanding of Jewish burial customs during the Second Temple period. A coin of Herod Agrippa I from the year 42/43 C.E.

was discovered by Antiquities Authority anthropologist Joe Zias in a skull inside the ossuary which carries the inscription מִרְיָם בִּרְתָּ שִׁמְעוֹן (mir-YAM be-RAT shim'ON, Miriam daughter of Shim'on). In addition to the skull of an adult female over forty years old, this ossuary contained the partial remains of an adult female of unknown age, and one child two to twelve years old.

This is a significant discovery because it suggests the pagan custom of placing a coin or coins between the teeth of the deceased as a payment to Charon, the ferryman in Greek mythology who was thought to carry the spirits of the dead across the River Styx to the Underworld. Until recently, because very few coins had been found in Jewish tombs and none in a Jewish skull, such a discovery would have been considered evidence of Jewish idolatry. In the mid-1970s, however, Rachel Hachlili discovered

A Sadducee Who Believed in an Afterlife?

It is rather surprising that we find in a Sadducean tomb evidence of the pagan custom of supplying the dead with payment for entrance into the Underworld. The Sadducees strongly opposed the idea of the resurrection of the dead:

The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. (Acts 23:8)

The Sadducees hold that the soul perishes along with the body. (*Antiquities* 18:16).

However, it may be that unofficially women were permitted to hold a few superstitions, and so a coin in the mouth of a female member of the family is less surprising than it would be if found in the mouth of a male. Alternatively, the coin could have been slipped into this woman's mouth, without the knowledge of the family, by a Gentile slave who loved her mistress and

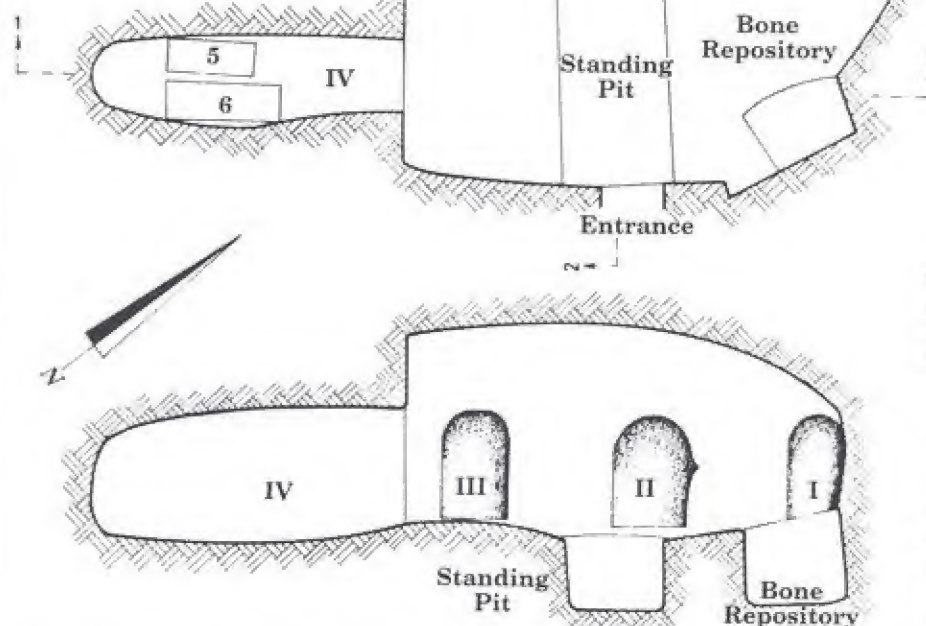
feared for her safe journey across the River Styx.

The personal objects such as sandals that were found in coffin tombs at Jericho and Dura Europos, dating from mid-first century B.C. to about 10 A.D., were only in coffins of women and children (R. Hachlili and A. Killebrew, "Jewish Funerary Customs during the Second Temple Period, in the Light of the Excavations at the Jericho Necropolis," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 115 [1983], 116). Similarly, the coin discovered in the first-century A.D. Caiaphas tomb was found in a woman's skull.

S. Lieberman claims that Jews placed personal belongings in tombs, not because the dead needed them but because the onlookers at the funeral found the practice poignant ("Some Aspects of Afterlife in Early Rabbinic Literature," *American Academy for Jewish Research*, 1 [1965], 509).

— David Bivin

Plan of the tomb showing the entrance (at bottom), the standing pit immediately inside the entrance, and to its right the pit which served as a repository for bones. The four loculi are numbered I-IV, and the two ossuaries found in situ in Loculus IV are numbered 5 and 6. The irregular line across the upper left corner of the plan shows the location of the opening broken in the tomb's roof by construction equipment. The scale is 1:50.



Cross section (2-2) of the tomb showing its entrance, the entrance of Loculus IV, the standing pit and Loculus II.



Cross section (1-1) of the tomb showing to the left Loculus IV, the entrances of Loculi III, II and I, and below them the two pits that are hewn in the tomb floor.

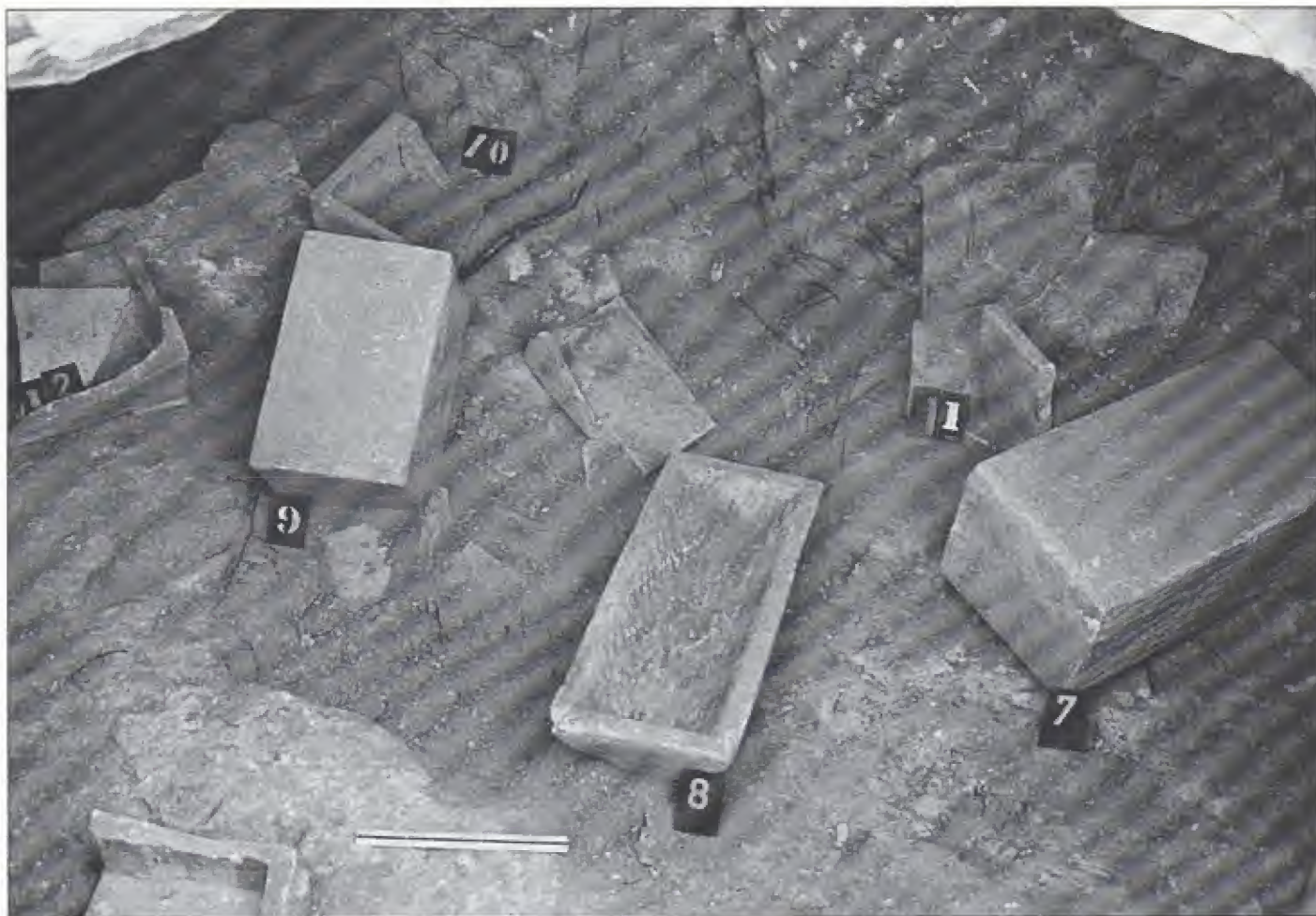
two coins in a Jewish skull in the Second Temple period necropolis of Jericho. Additional research showed that a number of coins had been found in previously excavated Jewish burial tombs of the Second Temple period in Jerusalem. To these can now be added the coins found in tombs excavated by Ronny Reich in the Mamillah district, and the coin discovered by us.

The coin we found in the Caiaphas tomb is the first unequivocal evidence of the existence of this pagan custom in Jerusalem. This allows us to conclude that the Jewish residents of Jerusalem **occasionally** adopted the pagan burial practice which included placing a coin between the teeth of the dead. However

this phenomenon must be seen as just one of a wide range of pagan influences on the Jewish population in the first century.

The Ossuaries

Five of the twelve ossuaries discovered in the Caiaphas family tomb had inscriptions. These include well-known personal names from the corpus of ossuary inscriptions, such as **שלום** (*sha-LOM*, Shalom), **מרים בת שבע** (*mir-YAM be-RAT shim-ON*, Miriam daughter of Shim'on), and **שמ**, which is apparently the beginning of the name **שמעון** (*shim-ON*, Shim'on). They also include names never before found in ossuary inscriptions: **קפא** (*ka-ya-FA*, Caiapha) on Ossuary 3, and **יהוסף בר קפא** and **יהוסף בר קפא** (*ye-ho-SEF bar ka-ya-FA*, Joseph bar



Above: The interior of the tomb viewed from the opening accidentally broken in its roof by construction equipment.



Left: Close-up of the partially excavated standing pit, approximately 48 cm. deep when all the fill was removed. The lower part of the blocked entrance can be seen behind the pit at the upper edge of the photo.



The inner side of the blocked tomb entrance. The entrance is 72 cm. high and 47 cm. wide, meaning that a person would have to crawl to enter the tomb. In front of the entrance is the standing pit which allowed a person to stand while inside the tomb. Distance from tomb floor to ceiling varies from 139 to 100 cm.; distance from pit floor to ceiling is approximately 187 cm., almost 6 ft. 2 in.

Caiapha) on Ossuary 6. These names apparently refer to the family of the high priest Caiapha, transliterated "Caiaphas" in the New Testament and Josephus.

Six of the ossuaries are decorated. Ossuary 6, the ossuary of Joseph bar Caiapha, is magnificently decorated in a style that is not common among ossuaries of the Second Temple period (see page 16). The ossuary's ornamentation is on one of its long sides and includes a pattern of two large circles, between which are symmetric floral motifs, united by a ribbon or ring. Each circle contains six small whorled rosettes which are separated by a symmetrical, orange-painted floral motif identical to the motif between the two circles. The upper rosette in each circle has six petals, three of which are painted orange alternately. A similar rosette is located in the center of the upper part of the frame above the floral motif which separates the two circles. On the outside edges of the circles appear unpainted palmettes, and the facade's frame is composed of a design of stylized leafy branches, a typical ossuary motif.

The partial remains of six individuals were found in this ossuary: a male approximately sixty years old, an adult female whose exact age could not be determined, a youth thirteen to eighteen years old, a child two to twelve years old, and two infants. Ossuary 3, which like Ossuary 6 bears the name Caiapha, contained the remains of an adult female, a youth, two children and an infant.

The other five decorated ossuaries discovered in the tomb have motifs characteristic of ossuary art of the period such as division into panels within which are rosettes, and a fluted column topped by a stylized Ionic capital set on a stepped base in imitation of the entrances of monumental Jewish tombs which have a column set into the facade. Other characteristic ornamentation includes zigzag patterns, concentric circles resembling nail heads, palm frond motifs, and egg and dart patterns.

The potsherds found in the tomb are typical of the Second Temple period, especially of the first century C.E. — pieces

of bowls, pear-shaped bottles, flasks, jugs and cooking pots, as well as a Herodian lamp and a round-type lamp. All this fits the date suggested by the coin mentioned above.

Two iron nails were also discovered in the tomb, one in the southern loculus and the other in Ossuary 1. It appears that these nails were used inside the tomb to scratch the inscriptions on the ossuaries after the bones had been collected and placed in them, even after some of the ossuaries had been placed in their loculi.

Conclusion

The site of the house of the high priest Caiaphas has been known since the time of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (333 C.E.) to be in the vicinity of Mount Zion, where it can still be visited today. Josephus' description of the line of Titus' siege wall suggests that the burial monument of Caiaphas' father-in-law, Hanan (Annas) the high priest, must be sought somewhere in the southern part of Jerusalem not far north of the Caiaphas tomb:

Starting at...the site of his own camp, he [Titus] directed the wall toward the lower region of the New Town and from there across the Kidron to the Mount of Olives; then, bending toward the south, it enclosed the mount as far as the rock called Peristereon and the adjoining hill which overhangs the Siloam ravine. From there, turning westward, the wall descended into the Valley of the Fountain, and then ascended to the burial monument of Ananus [Annas] the high priest.... (War 5:504-505)

An attempt to identify the monument was already made in the last century by Warren and Conder who suggested that it should be located in the vicinity of Akeldama, and it seems that the southern part of the city was the main burial ground of the members of the Caiaphas family.

The Caiaphas tomb contributes to our knowledge of one of the leading families in Jerusalem in the Second Temple period about which we had no archaeological information until this discovery. JP

The interior of the tomb showing two ossuaries removed in antiquity from their loculi by grave robbers — Ossuary 3 on the left with the rounded lid and Ossuary 4, on which the meter-rod is resting, with a gabled lid. The meter-rod shows that Ossuary 4 is approximately 65 cm. long. Ossuary 3 is 50 cm. long, less than 20 inches.



Enlarged photo of first-century C.E. ceramic oil lamp which was discovered in pieces in the fill of the standing pit. This type of lamp, with its characteristic “hammer-head” nozzle with wickhole, is known as a “Herodian lamp” because originally it was mistakenly thought to date from the Herodian period at the end of the first century B.C.E. The lamp and other pottery, along with the coin of Herod Agrippa I found in Ossuary 8, enabled archaeologist Zvi Greenhut to date the tomb to the first century C.E. Dimensions: 7 cm. wide x 9.5 cm. long.



Glossary

Aramaic (ar-ə-mă'ik) – a northwest Semitic language closely related to Hebrew. The earliest Aramaic inscriptions date from the 10th–9th centuries B.C. Its square script replaced the Hebrew archaic script, and by the time of Jesus was the normal script for writing in Hebrew.

bar – the Aramaic word בַּר (son, son of). In the Second Temple period *bar* often was used together with the father's name or a family nickname to distinguish males bearing the same personal name. Females with the same personal name often were distinguished by adding בַּת (be-RAT, daughter, daughter of) and the father's name. The Hebrew equivalents of *bar* and be-RAT are בֶּן (ben, son) or בִּן (ben, son of) and בַּת (bat, daughter, daughter of).

B.C.E. – abbreviation of “Before Common Era,” corresponding to B.C. in Christian terminology. JERUSALEM

PERSPECTIVE uses B.C.E. and C.E. in articles by Jewish scholars.

burial chamber – a central room of a burial cave into the sides of which may be cut loculi or burial recesses.

C.E. – abbreviation of “Common Era,” corresponding to A.D. in Christian terminology.

halachah – (הֲלָכָה, ha-la-KAH; plural: הֲלָכוֹת, ha-la-KOT, halachot) law, regulation; the legal ruling on a particular issue; the body of Jewish law, especially the legal part of rabbinic literature. **halachic** (hă-lăk'ik) – pertaining to halachah.

Hasmonean – pertaining to a family of Jewish priests who led a successful revolt which began in 168 B.C. against the Hellenized Selucid rulers in Syria. The Hasmoneans, nicknamed the Maccabees, ruled the land of Israel from 142 to 63 B.C.

loculus – a recess or small chamber cut into a wall of a room in a burial

cave for the reception of an ossuary or coffin. Plural: loculi.

Mishnah – (מִשְׁנָה, mish-NAH) the collection of Oral Torah compiled by Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi around 200 A.D.

ossuary (ăsh'ə-wer-ē) – a “bone box” or depository for the bones of the dead, a rectangular box with lid, usually hewn out of limestone.

Second Temple period – literally the period from the rebuilding of the Temple, about 530 B.C., to its destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D. However, the term usually refers to the latter part of this period, beginning with the Hasmonean Uprising in 168 B.C. and often extending to the end of the Bar Kochva Revolt in 135 A.D.

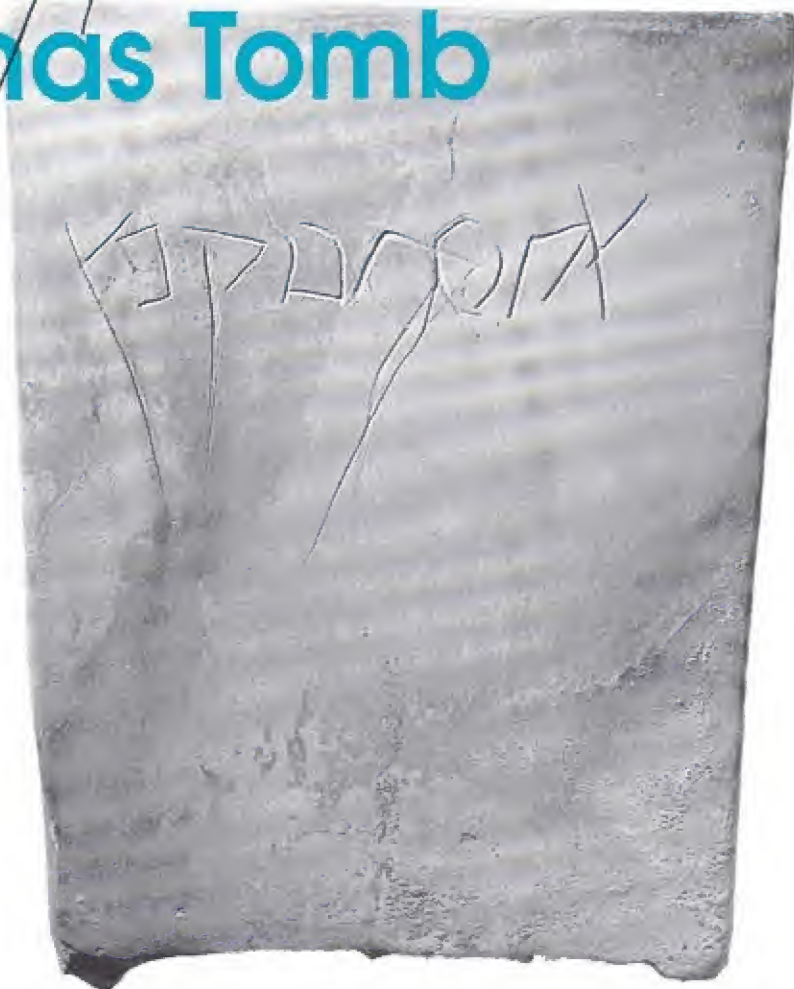
Tosefta – (תּוֹסֵפְתָּא, to-sef-TA', the addition) a collection of Oral Torah supplementing the Mishnah. Compiled about 220–230 A.D., a generation after the Mishnah.

Ossuary Inscriptions from the Caiaphas Tomb

by Ronny Reich

The ossuaries Zvi Greenhut excavated from a burial cave in the south of Jerusalem bear several inscriptions. These are actually graffiti in the cursive style of Jewish script typical of ossuary inscriptions, and were incised with a sharp implement, probably by the relatives of those who were being buried. The language of the inscriptions is Aramaic which, together with Hebrew and Greek, was one of the three languages used by Jews in the Second Temple period.

Some letters are clear, such as the ל (*lamed*), ק (*kof*) and ש (*shin*). Others are more difficult to read, such as the *mem* in its medial (מ) and final (ם) forms. One typical feature of cursive script is the use





Above: Facsimile of the inscription קַיָּאֵפָא (ka-ya-FA, Caiapha) (70% of actual size) found on Ossuary 3. This and the other facsimiles were traced from the ossuaries by Ronny Reich.

Right: The narrow side of Ossuary 3 with inscription reading קַיָּאֵפָא (ka-ya-FA, Caiapha). Note that this ossuary's lid is of the rounded type. Dimensions (excluding lid): 21 cm. wide x 25 cm. high.



Previous page, top: Facsimile of the inscription יְהוֹסֵף בֶּר קַיָּאֵפָא (ye-ho-SEF bar ka-ya-FA, Joseph bar Caiapha) (88% of actual size). This inscription was found on the narrow side of Ossuary 6, pictured at the bottom of the previous page. Ossuary dimensions: 29 cm. wide x 38 cm. high.

of ligatures, that is the connection of two adjacent letters into one combined sign.

To the Hebrew-reading layman, the form of א (alef) that appears in these inscriptions might seem strange. The letter is missing its left leg and looks like the final form of the tsadi (צ). In fact it is one of the cursive forms of the alef in use in this period.¹

These inscriptions are small in size and crudely drawn, and it is obvious that they were not meant for public display. Rather, the inscriptions were for the purpose of identifying the various family members buried in the tomb. Perhaps also it was believed that writing the deceased person's name would keep it from being forgotten.

The Inscriptions

Ossuary 5: שלום

שָׁלוֹם (sha-LOM, Shalom) is not the benediction "peace," but the common feminine name, transliterated Σαλώμη (Salômē, Salome) in Greek. שָׁלוֹם is a variant of the name שְׁלֹמֶצֶן (she-lom-tsi-YON, Shlomzion). The most recent statistical study of Jewish personal names in use in the Second Temple period² found that twenty-five percent of the women who are mentioned by name in literary sources and inscriptions bore that name.

Ossuary 8: מרים ברת שמעון

מִרְיָם בִּרְתָּ שְׁמַעֲוֹן (mir-YAM be-RAT shim-ON) means "Miriam daughter of Shim'on." מִרְיָם (mir-YAM, Miriam), or its



other version מִרְיָה (*mir-YAH*, Miriah), from which the name "Mary" is derived, was in use as a personal name by about another twenty-five percent of the Jewish females in that period.³ These statistical findings are quite surprising as they imply that half of the women in the community were using only two names: Shlomzion/Shalom and Miriam/Miriah.

שִׁמְעוֹן (*shim'ON*, Shim'on) was the most frequent personal name in use among Jewish males in the Second Temple period. Its Greek transliteration is Συμεών (*Symeōn*, Simeon), but the similar-sounding pure Greek name Σίμων (*Simōn*, Simon) is often substituted for it.

Ossuary 4: שֵׁם

This inscription could be read as שֵׁם (*shem*, Shem), one of Noah's sons (Gen. 6:10). This is probably not Shem, however, as Jews of the period usually did not choose names of the ancestors of mankind. The Mishnah (Shabbat 12:3) mentions that names were abbreviated, and the example cited is exactly the abbreviation we probably find here: שֵׁם for שִׁמְעוֹן (*shim'ON*,

Shim'on). Such an abbreviated name would seem meaningless as a burial inscription unless Shem was indeed the nickname used by relatives and friends of the interred person. It is also possible that שֵׁם is the result of an incomplete writing of the name שִׁמְעוֹן.

Ossuary 3: קַפָּא

This is the same name that appears spelled in two different ways in the inscriptions on Ossuary 6 — קַפָּא, as here, and קִפָּא, with the addition of a * (*yod*), probably to be pronounced *ka-ya-FA*² (Caiapha).

Ossuary 6:

יְהוֹסֵף בֶּר קַפָּא and יְהוֹסֵף בֶּר קִפָּא

On one end of the ossuary is inscribed יְהוֹסֵף בֶּר קַפָּא (*ye-ho-SEF bar ka-ya-FA*², Joseph bar Caiapha), and on the back side, יְהוֹסֵף בֶּר קִפָּא. The two inscriptions are identical, with one minor difference: the addition of the letter *yod* to the last word of the second inscription, a spelling variation which does not indicate a change in pronunciation.

*Decorated long side of Ossuary 3 with two six-petalled rosettes, each within two concentric circles; between them a shallowly carved fluted column with Ionic capital on a stepped base. In the upper corners of the ossuary are small concentric circle motifs, perhaps in imitation of nail heads visible on wooden coffins or ossuaries used in the previous period. קַפָּא (*ka-ya-FA*, Caiapha) is inscribed on the right-hand end of this ossuary. Dimensions (excluding lid): 50 cm. wide x 25 cm. high.*

The carved decorations on the face of Ossuary 6. This is one of the most beautifully decorated ossuaries ever discovered, perhaps an indication of the importance of Joseph bar Caiaphas whose name is twice inscribed on it. The partial remains of six individuals were found in this ossuary, including those of a male approximately sixty years old. (The partial remains of a total of sixty-three different people were found in the Caiaphas tomb.) Dimensions: 74 cm. long x 38 cm. high.

יְהוֹסֵף (ye-ho-SEF, Joseph), with its variants יוֹסֵף (yo-SEF) and יוֹסֵה (yo-SEH), is the second most frequent Jewish masculine name used in the Second Temple period. כַּיָּאֵפָא (ka-ya-FAʼ, Caiapha) is an Aramaic name which appears here for the first time in an inscription. At face value it would seem that a person in Ossuary 3 was the father of Joseph bar (son of) Caiapha buried in Ossuary 6. However ka-ya-FAʼ is obviously a nickname, and therefore it is more plausible that both persons were related to a forefather who had acquired what became a family nickname which was inherited by his descendants.

Another statistical study of personal names⁴ indicated that approximately twenty-eight percent of Jewish males mentioned in literary sources and on inscriptions of the period used only four personal names, and forty-four percent of the males used nine names. A nickname therefore was a necessary means of distinguishing among people with the same name, and sometimes people were even called just by their nicknames.

When an inscription refers to a person as "X bar (son of) Y," Y is not necessarily the name of X's father, but might be a family nickname. "Joseph bar Caiapha" therefore can mean "Joseph of the family Caiapha." A nickname was often acquired



*Facsimile of the inscription
יְהוֹסֵף בֶּר כַּיָּאֵפָא
(ye-ho-SEF bar
ka-ya-FAʼ, Joseph
bar Caiapha)
(55% of actual size)
found on the back
face of Ossuary 6.
The inscription was
written vertically
on two lines from
bottom to top.*



because of the occupation or expertise of a forefather, or due to a person's physical characteristics. This frequently became a family name, as has been demonstrated recently by J. Naveh.⁵

The Name Caiaphas

The discovery of these ossuaries draws attention to the high priest in Jerusalem in the years 18–36 C.E. The New Testament provides only his nickname: *Καϊάφας* (*Kaiaphas*, Caiaphas).⁶ Josephus mentions the man twice⁷ and refers to him as “Joseph nicknamed [ἐπικαλούμενον (*epikaloumenon*)] Caiaphas,” explicitly stating that Caiaphas is indeed a nickname. However, both sources provide only the Greek version of the name.

The inscriptions found on Ossuaries 3 and 6 establish the name's original Semitic form: *𐤏𐤓𐤕*. This rules out the spelling *𐤏𐤓𐤕𐤁*,

(*ke·FAʿ*, rock, stone; Cephass), the Hebrew equivalent of the name Πέτρος (*Petros*, Peter), which had been thought by some scholars to be the Hebrew equivalent of Caiaphas.

The following rabbinic sources should be considered in any comparative study of the name *𐤏𐤓𐤕*:

1. Mishnah, Para 3:5, mentions *𐤏𐤓𐤕𐤁 𐤓* (*el-yo·e·NAI ben ha·ka·YAF*, El'yoenai ben ha-Caiaph), a high priest in Jerusalem, one of the few who was fortunate enough to burn a red heifer. The form *𐤏𐤓𐤕* (*ha·ka·YAF*) is the Hebrew version of the Aramaic *𐤏𐤓𐤕𐤁* (*ka·ya·FAʿ*), the name that appears on Ossuary 6. The relation between this person and the Caiaphas mentioned by Josephus and the Gospels has already been suggested by a number of scholars. Some believe that El'yoenai was the son of Joseph Caiaphas⁸;



The decorated face of Ossuary 5. Note that this ossuary has a flat lid. Dimensions (excluding lid): 57 cm. long x 28 cm. high.

others, that they were brothers.⁹

2. Tosefta, Yevamot 1:10, refers to מִשְׁפַּחַת בֵּית קִיפָאִי מִבֵּית מְקִישֵׁשׁ (mish-PA-hat bet ke-FAI / ka-ya-FAI [ka-ya-FA²] mi-BET me-ko-SHESH, the family of the house of Cephai/Caiaphai [Caiapha] from Beth Mekoshesh), a priestly family of whom some members became high priests.¹⁰

3. Jerusalem Talmud, Ma'asrot 52^a, mentions one מְנַחֵם בֶּר מַכְסִימָא אֲחֵי דִינְתָן קִיפָאִי (me-na-HEM bar mak-si-MA² a-HUI de-yo-na-TAN ka-ya-FA²; Menahem, son of Maxima, the brother of Jonathan Caiapha). This points clearly to the fact that קִיפָאִי (ka-ya-FA²) was indeed a nickname, as Maxima was Jonathan's father.

Relevant Studies

Two recent studies, published prior to the present finds, attempt to reconstruct the history of the Caiaphas family in the Second Temple period and earlier.

R. Brodi¹¹ focuses on the verse in Mishnah, Para 3:5, and on establishing the correct original form of the name, however he almost entirely neglects the reference in Tosefta, Yevamot 1:10. He attempts to demonstrate that El'yoenai ben ha-Caiaph (Mishnah, Para 3:5) and Elionaeus son of Cantheras (*Antiquities* 19:342) are the same person. Brodi points to the fact that the names Caiaphas and

Cantheras are etymologically related, as the Hebrew ha-Caiaph (Aramaic: Caiapha) and Latin cant[h]erius (Greek: κανθήλιος, kanthēlios) bear two common meanings: "basket," and "carrying" (e.g. "wooden pole," used either for roofing or the supporting of grapevines.) It should be said that Caiaphas might also point to several other Semitic etymologies which are not related to the Greek/Latin etymology of Cantheras.

B.-Z. Rosenfeld¹² focuses on the reference to the house of Caiapha in Tosefta, Yevamot 1:10. While Brodi takes pains to prove that Caiaphas equals Cantheras, basing his arguments on the words' double etymological identity, Rosenfeld takes this for granted. He elaborates on the family's musical background which is suggested by the name Cathros, found in rabbinic literature and in an inscription and apparently etymologically related to the Greek κιθάρα (kithara, lyre), which he equates with the Greek name Cantheras. Brodi suggests that the Semitic version of the name Caiaphas was a translation of the Greek Cantheras.¹³ Rosenfeld, however, takes the opposite direction and tries to prove that the name Caiaphas predated the name Cantheras.¹⁴

Are the three family names Caiaphas, Cantheras and Cathros simply different versions of the same name, referring to the

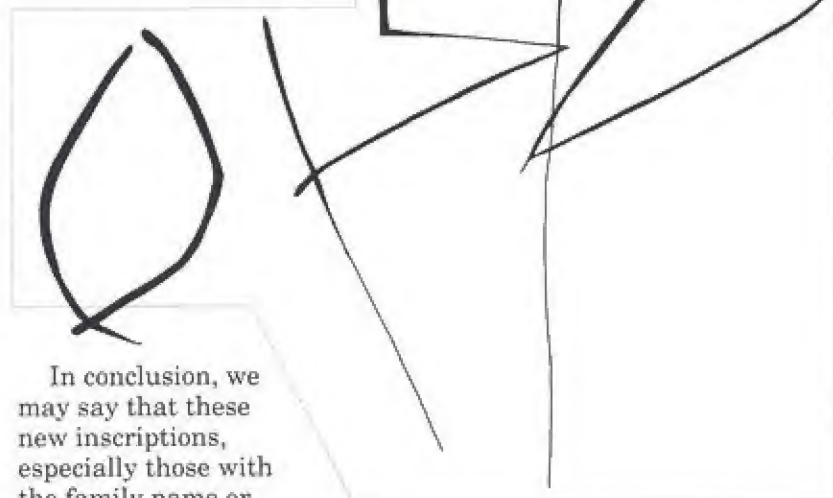
same family? It seems reasonable to assume that Cantheras is the same name as Cathros, it being unlikely that two different families would bear names so phonetically similar. It is also clear that Cantheras predates Cathros — the letter representing the “n” sound, a weak letter in most languages, was assimilated with the following letter and thus disappeared. This is indeed corroborated by the stone weight found in Jerusalem in the “Burnt House” destroyed in 70 C.E., which bears the inscription קתרס בר ([*de*-*BAR* *kat-ROS*, [of] bar Cathros).¹⁵ Here we find the Semitic form of the name without the “n” sound. Cathros is also mentioned in rabbinic sources.¹⁶

Summary

The ossuary inscriptions found in the Caiaphas tomb point to the fact that the name Caiaphas in its Aramaic version was in daily use in the middle of the first century C.E. They also show that the Caiaphas family had a burial place in the necropolis of Jerusalem — an average burial cave which might have belonged

only to a certain part of the family, perhaps a branch which left the original family settlement in Beth Mekoshesh and moved to Jerusalem. This move may have occurred during the early days of the reign of Herod the Great when he promoted several priestly families to the high priesthood at the expense of other families who had been in power during the Hasmonean period.²⁰

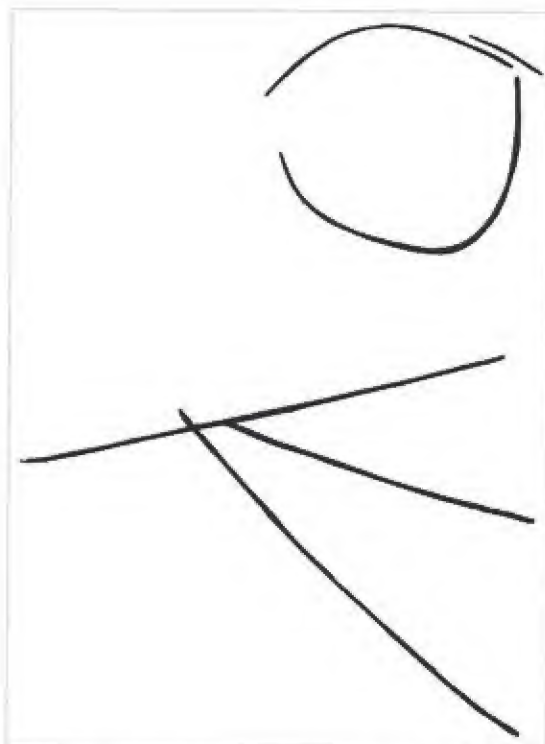
The coin found in Ossuary 8 dates to the forties of the first century C.E. The two ossuaries relevant to Caiaphas — numbers 3 and 6 — could be dated as early as the beginning of the century.



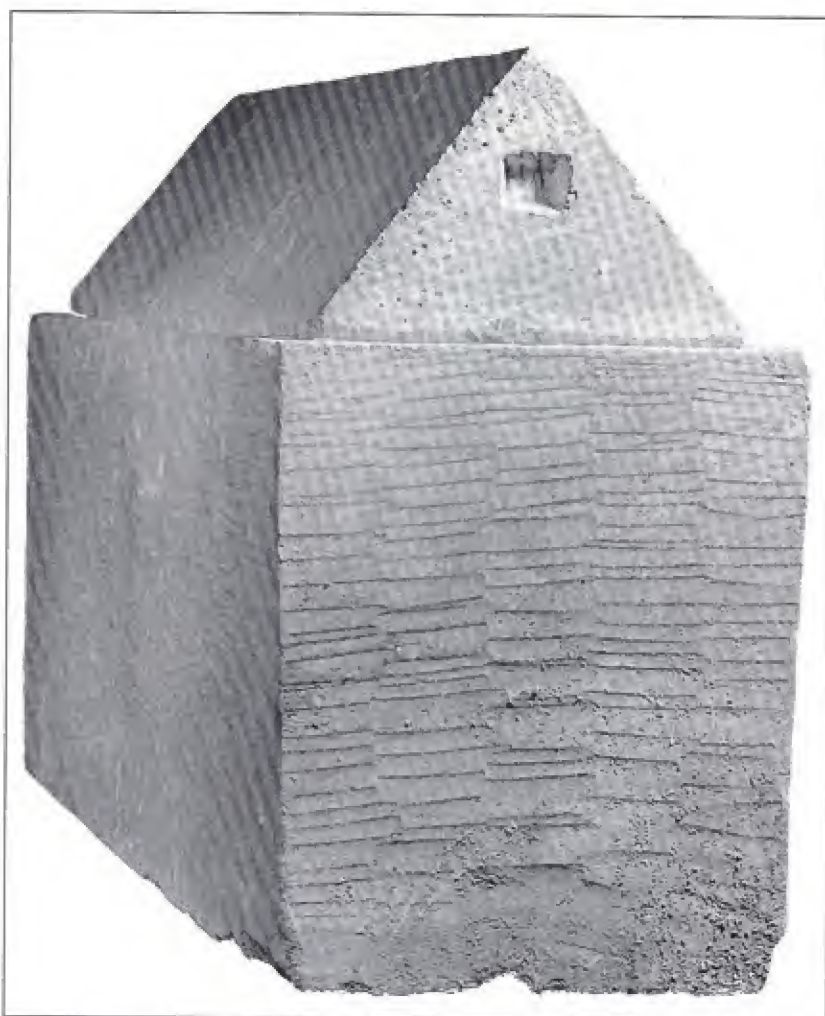
In conclusion, we may say that these new inscriptions, especially those with the family name or nickname Caiaphas, can be related directly or indirectly to one of the priestly families which lived in Jerusalem during the first century C.E. This family bore the nickname of an ancestor who probably acquired it through his occupation or expertise. Members of a branch of this family attained high positions in Jerusalem. JP

Facsimile (61% of actual size) of the inscription שָׁלוֹם (sha-LOM, Shalom), a feminine name, found on the undecorated long side of Ossuary 5. The inscription was written vertically from bottom to top.

1. N. Avigad, "The Palaeography of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Documents," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 4 (1965), 56–87, Cols. XXIII, XXV, XXXII.
2. T. Ilan, "Notes on the Distribution of Jewish Women's Names in Palestine in the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 40/2 (1989), 191–192.
3. Ibid.
4. T. Ilan, "Names of Hasmoneans in the



Facsimile (61% of actual size) of the inscription שִׁמְעוֹן, probably an abbreviated form of שִׁמְעוֹן (shim'ON, Shim'on), found on the undecorated Ossuary 4 seen at right. The inscription can be seen on the ossuary (using a magnifying glass) near the front edge of the left side, written vertically from bottom to top. Dimensions (excluding lid): 27 cm. wide x 66 cm. long x 32 cm. high.



Second Temple Period," *Eretz-Israel* 19 (M. Avi-Yonah Volume, 1987), 238–241 (Hebrew with English summary on p. 79*).

5. J. Naveh, "Nameless People," *Israel Exploration Journal* 40 (1990), 108–123.

6. Mt. 26:3, 57; Lk. 3:2; Jn. 11:49; 18:13, 14, 24, 28; Acts 4:6.

7. *Antiquities* 18:35, 95.

8. M. Stern, "Herod's Policies and Jewish Society at the End of the Second Temple Period," *Tarbiz* 35 (1966), 235–253. Reprinted in *Studies in Jewish History: The Second Temple Period*, eds. M. Amit, I. Gafni, M.D. Herr, (Jerusalem, 1991), p. 196 (Hebrew).

9. See, for example, D.R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea* (Jerusalem, 1987), pp. 129–130 (Hebrew).

10. The reading of the parallel in the Jerusalem Talmud, Yevamot 3^a, is שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּרֶךְ נָחִיָּה (Shimon bar Nachai).

11. R. Brodi, "Caiaphas and Cantheras," in D.R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea* (Jerusalem, 1987), Appendix 4, pp. 203–208 (Hebrew); English translation (Tübingen, 1990), pp. 190–195.

12. B.-Z. Rosenfeld, "The Settlement of Two

Families of High Priests during the Second Temple Period," *Historical-Geographical Studies in the Settlement of Eretz-Israel*, vol. 2, eds. Y. Katz, Y. Ben-Arieh, Y. Kaniel (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 212–218 (Hebrew).

13. Brodi, op. cit., p. 195.

14. Rosenfeld, op. cit., p. 214.

15. N. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Jerusalem-Nashville, 1983), pp. 129–131. Another inscription which might be relevant is בַּת קַתְרָא (bat kat-RA², daughter of Cathra) written in ink on a potsherd found at Masada (see Y. Yadin and J. Naveh, *The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions: Masada I* [Jerusalem, 1989], p. 22, n. 405).

16. Babylonian Talmud, Pesahim 57^a; Tosefta, Menahot 13:21.

17. Stern, loc. cit.

18. The name הַרְשִׁיין appears in an inscription on an ossuary discovered on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (E.L. Sukenik, *Tarbiz* i, 4 [1929/30], 139–142).

19. S. Klein, לחקר השמות והכינויים, *Leshonenu* 1 (1929), 341.

20. Stern, op. cit.



Above: Detail of the inscription מרים בת רח שמשון (mir-YAM be-RAT shim'ON, Miriam daughter of Shim'on) found on the undecorated Ossuary 8. The inscription is written on two lines vertically from bottom to top on one of the long sides of the ossuary. Note the crack in the ossuary to the right of the inscription — this ossuary was restored from pieces discovered in the fill of the standing pit. Also note the chisel marks of the stone craftsman who carved this ossuary.



Left: Facsimile of the above inscription (50% of actual size) found on Ossuary 8. The inscription was scratched with a sharp implement, probably with one of the two nails discovered in the tomb. This is possibly the work of a member of the Caiaphas family, and is written in cursive script rather than printed (there is a ligature in each of the last two words). The inscription was most likely for the family's own use, making it easier to identify the many family members buried in the tomb.

Jewish Burial Customs in the First Century

by Ronny Reich

The process of Jewish burial in the Second Temple period took place in two stages. First, the dead person was buried on a ledge or in a loculus of a rock-hewn tomb. Then after about one year, when the body had decomposed, family members of the

deceased returned to the tomb, gathered the bones and put them into a small box of stone or wood called an ossuary. Sometimes more than one person's bones were gathered into an ossuary, but they were always the bones of family members — a husband and wife, a child and one of his or her parents, brothers or other relatives.

In many cases the names of the dead were inscribed on the ossuary, and sometimes also the family relationship.

Frequently additional details about the deceased were added such as a nickname, profession or other

biographical detail. The ossuary inscriptions are brief and were written in one of the three languages in use in the period: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

According to the halachah, contact with corpses, tombs or graves transmitted the highest degree of ritual impurity, and care was taken to limit such contact. Burial was forbidden within settlements,

and cemeteries were required to be at least fifty cubits (twenty-five meters) from a settlement's boundaries (Mishnah, Bava Batra 2:9).

However, as new houses were built, boundaries did not remain constant, and it was ruled that a

tomb or cemetery which became surrounded by settlement on two or more of its sides must be moved (Tosefta, Bava Batra 1:11). Tombs which were discovered by chance and those which created a public nuisance also were required to be moved (Tosefta, Ahilot 16:9). The principle was that daily life should continue to take place as normal, and if a cemetery or individual tombs interfered with this, it was not only possible but necessary to move them to another place.

The classic example of this

religious ruling being carried out is indicated in the Second Temple period inscription found in Jerusalem which at one time had been affixed to the tomb hewn for the reburial of the bones of Uzziah king of Judah. The inscription states explicitly that Uzziah's bones had been moved from their original burial place to the new site. JP



Aramaic inscription on a marble plaque, which at one time had been affixed to the new tomb in Jerusalem of King Uzziah of Judah. The inscription reads: "Here were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah. Do not open." Dimensions: 34 cm. wide x 35 cm. high x 6 cm. thick.

...To Bury Caiaphas, Not to Praise Him

by David Flusser

Caiaphas¹ is the most prominent Second Temple period Jewish personality whose ossuary and remains have been discovered. I have used the occasion of this discovery to discuss Caiaphas' personality and place among the high priests, and to explain some of the background to his fateful decision to eliminate Jesus and his disciples.² A careful reading of the Gospel reports shows that the involvement of this high priest³ in handing Jesus over to the Romans and persecuting his disciples was more decisive than it is commonly believed.

Both rabbinic sources and the recently discovered ossuaries show that the name Caiaphas was the designation for this whole family. The Tosefta speaks about the house of Caiapha (Yevamot 1:10), and Josephus refers to Joseph surnamed Caiaphas (*Antiquities* 18:35, 95). The surname קַיָּאֶפָּאס (ka-ya-FA', Caiapha) appears on two of the ossuaries discovered in the tomb, and one of these is inscribed with the name יְהוֹסֵפֶ בֶּר קַיָּאֶפָּאס (ye-ho-SEF bar ka-ya-FA', Joseph bar Caiapha).⁴

The family came from בית מְקֹשֶׁשׁ (*bet me-ho-SHESH*, Beth Mekoshesh), a village in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This clan of high priests were descendants of the second wife of a family member from a levirate marriage. One of the family members, Elionaeus, the biblical אֱלִי־הוֹנַי (*'el-ye-HO-'e-NAI*),⁵ was appointed high priest in approximately 44 C.E. by King Agrippa I.⁶ Thus two high priests are known who belonged to the Caiaphas family, the earlier one being Joseph (18–36 C.E.). It is even probable that the high priest Elionaeus was the son of Joseph Caiaphas.

Joseph's Promotion

Was this priestly family important before Joseph's appointment to the highest task in Israel? Did he become high priest because he was born into one of the distinguished priestly families, or was there another

reason for his precipitous promotion?

A cause for Joseph Caiaphas' advancement could have been his marriage to the daughter of Annas, the head of a powerful high-priestly clan. This connection is reported only by the Gospel of John (18:13), which is not completely reliable as an historical document. Nevertheless, I tend to accept John's statement that Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and to believe that Joseph Caiaphas became high priest because he married Annas' daughter.⁷

Annas (Hanan) the son of Sethi was the founder of an important dynasty of high priests. Josephus writes:

"It is said that the elder Ananus [Annas] was extremely fortunate. He had five sons, all of whom, after he himself had previously enjoyed the office for a very long period, became high priest of God — a thing that had never happened to any other of our high priests" (*Antiquities* 20:198).

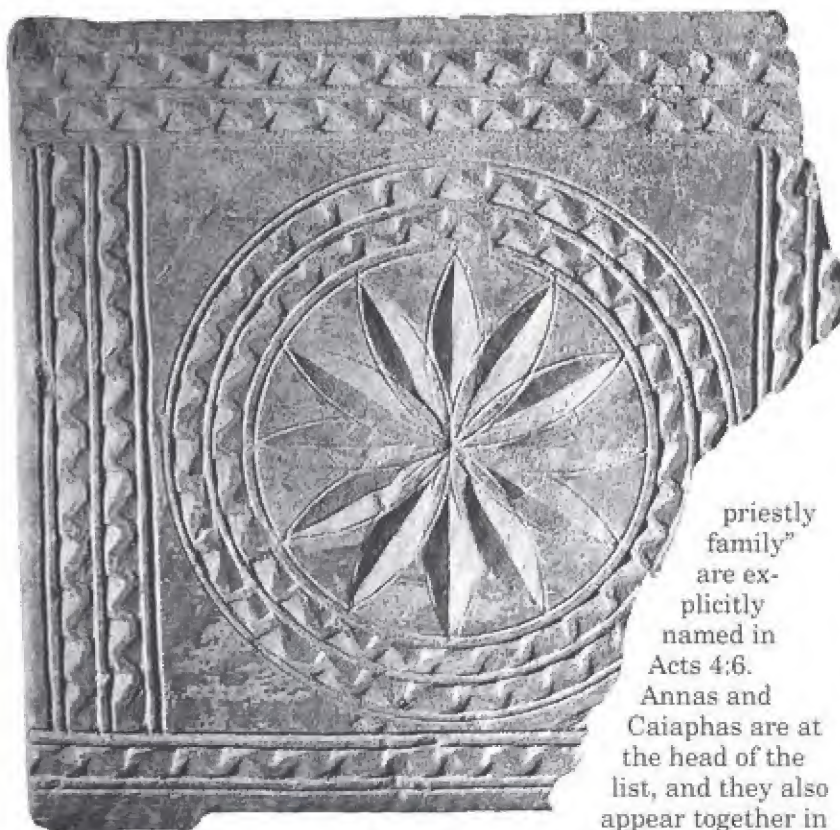
Annas was appointed by the Roman prefect Quirinius and held this office from 6 to 15 C.E. when he was deposed by the prefect Valerius Gratus. Thus, when Joseph Caiaphas was the high priest (18–36 C.E.), Annas was no longer active as high priest but still manipulated the power behind the "throne."⁸

The Clan of Annas

The New Testament accounts of the last week of Jesus' life and the persecution of the Church in Jerusalem confirm the assumption that Caiaphas belonged to a faction of Annas' family. "Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander and all who were of the high-



Detail of the head of Caiaphas from a fresco in the Arena Chapel at Padua, Italy, painted by Giotto between 1303–1305 C.E.



The left half of the decorated face of Ossuary 11. Within an outer square frame composed of zigzag patterns are two concentric zigzag-patterned round frames encircling a twelve-petalled rosette. Dimensions: approximately 33 cm. x 33 cm.

priestly family" are explicitly named in Acts 4:6. Annas and Caiaphas are at the head of the list, and they also appear together in John 18:13–24.

The clan of Annas without doubt belonged to the Sadducean party.⁹ This is explicitly stated in Acts 5:17 which refers to "the high priest and all who were with him, that is the party of the Sadducees." Also Annas the Younger, the son of our Annas, "followed the school of the Sadducees" (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20:199). Thus it is reasonable to assume that other members of the family, if not the whole clan, were Sadducees.

Josephus, in speaking of the younger Annas' affiliation to the Sadducees, says that they "are indeed more heartless than any other Jews when they sit in judgment" (*Antiquities* 20:199; cf. also *Antiquities* 13:294). In the Babylonian Talmud and the Tosefta there is a list of woes caused by high-priestly families. One of these is: "Woe unto me because of the house of Hanin, woe unto me for their calumnies" (Babylonian Talmud, Pesahim 57^a; Tosefta, Menahot 13:21). The house of Hanin, a reference to the mighty family of Annas, is accused of calumnies, and one could easily include among these calumnies the persecution of Jesus and his first disciples, in which Caiaphas also played a decisive role.

The New Testament indicates that those who were active in delivering Jesus to

Pilate were members of the high-priestly aristocracy. A further conclusion is almost inevitable, namely that the leading figures in this fateful action were Annas and his clan together with Joseph Caiaphas, probably his son-in-law.¹⁰

Jesus vs. the High Priests

In the first three Gospels, the "high priests" are presented as the main enemies of Jesus. The plot to kill Jesus is described there as follows: "Now the feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death; for they feared the people. Then...Judas called Iscariot...went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad and engaged to give him money. So he agreed, and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude" (Lk. 22:1–6). And when Jesus was finally arrested, "they seized him away, bringing him into the high priest's house" (Lk. 22:54). There, in Caiaphas' house, Jesus passed the night in custody, and the men who were holding Jesus mocked him (Lk. 22:63).

The interrogation took place the next morning, and it was the high priest Joseph Caiaphas who asked Jesus the decisive question: "Are you the Messiah?" (Mt. 26:62–64; Mk. 14:60–62). When he was turned over to Pilate, "the chief priests accused him of many things" (Mk. 15:3; Mt. 27:12), and when Pilate offered to release Jesus, "the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead" (Mk. 15:11; Mt. 27:20).

The first three Gospels do not explicitly indicate the cause of the hatred of those who delivered Jesus to death. One can only guess why the Temple hierarchy feared this prophet from Galilee and why they did everything they could to get rid of him. Jesus' presence in Jerusalem at Passover apparently represented a clear threat to them.

The aim of Jesus' pilgrimage to Jerusalem was neither to perform miracles nor to agitate against the Roman occupation, but he conceived his task as similar to that of Jeremiah at the close of the First Temple period, namely as a prophet of doom to warn the people of the future destruction of the Second Temple (see for instance Lk. 21:5–6).¹¹ He described the Temple as "a den of robbers" and began to

drive out those who did business there, but even so the Temple authorities seemed to have been powerless to stop him, “for all the people hung upon his words” (Lk. 19:45–48).

Jesus’ parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Lk. 20:9–18 and parallels) was clearly directed against the priestly establishment: “He [God] will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard [Israel] to others.” The “scribes and the chief priests” understood well the threat; they “tried to lay hands on him at that very hour, but they feared the people; for they perceived that he had told this parable against them. So they watched him, and sent spies who pretended to be sincere, that they might take hold of what he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor” (Lk. 20:19–20). Although Jesus did not fall into their trap, he was finally betrayed by one of his own disciples, arrested and brought to Caiaphas’ house.

Heartless Sadducees

The fear of Jesus’ opponents was not the only cause of the tragedy; it was also conditioned by their group disposition. They were Sadducees, and as we have seen, Josephus depicts them as “more heartless than any other Jews when they sit in judgment.” Concerning the high-priestly clan of Annas to which Caiaphas also belonged, we noted above a woe which mentions the venomous intrigues of that family. History teaches that those who are accused of acting viciously do not commonly respond with repentance. On the contrary, they generally become even more obstinate and react to the accusations by refusing to change their ways. This is what happened to Jesus’ adversaries.

At the beginning of the community of Jesus’ disciples in Jerusalem, “the priests and the Sadducees came upon them and arrested them” (Acts 4:1–3). We have already mentioned the list of these opponents in Acts 4:6, “who were all of the high-priestly family,” Caiaphas being among them. Later the apostles were again arrested by Caiaphas “the high priest and all who were with him, that is the party of the Sadducees” (Acts 5:17–18, 21). “And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest [i.e. Caiaphas] questioned them, saying: ‘We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet you have filled Jerusalem with

your teaching and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us” (Acts 5:27–28).

Thus, according to the Book of Acts, Caiaphas recognized very well the danger menacing him and his friends when Jesus’ disciples preached the new faith. In recounting the life and martyrdom of their Lord, Jesus’ disciples could not avoid mentioning the guilt of the Sadducean high priests who had delivered Jesus to the Romans. In the eyes of Caiaphas, by preaching this message to the people Jesus’ disciples were attempting to make the high priests responsible for Jesus’ death.

In contrast to what we know about Caiaphas and his faction, especially from John 11:47–53, the Pharisees of his time did not launch persecutions of Jewish prophetic movements. This is attested by Jesus himself (Mt. 23:29–31), according to whom the Pharisees of his day used to say, “If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.” Indeed, when one reads the Gospels critically, one becomes aware that the Pharisees did not play a decisive role in Jesus’ arrest, interrogation and crucifixion.¹² The Pharisees are not even mentioned by name in the context of Jesus’ trial as recounted in the first three Gospels, with the exception of the story about the guard at Jesus’ tomb (Mt. 27:62).¹³

When the Sanhedrin wanted to put Jesus’ disciples to death, their lives were saved by “a Pharisee called Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in high regard by all the people,” in other words Rabban Gamaliel the Elder. The Pharisees evidently disagreed with the action taken by the high priests against Jesus because, according to their halachah, handing over a Jew to a foreign authority was a sin which could not be forgiven.¹⁴ One can even assume that to the Pharisees the whole affair was further proof of Sadducean cruelty, and that the Pharisees’ criticism only increased the Sadducees’ persecution of Jesus’ disciples.

A similar clash between the Pharisees and Annas the Younger, probably the brother-in-law of Caiaphas, took place in the year 62 C.E. “Annas the Younger convened the Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, and certain others [probably Christians]. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them to be stoned” (*Antiquities* 20:200–203). The Pharisees,

who Josephus describes as the “inhabitants of the city who were considered the most fair-minded and were strict in the observance of the commandments,” managed to have the high priest Annas the Younger deposed from his position as a result of the illegal execution of James.

John's View

All four Gospels describe the decisive role of the high-priestly group and especially of the high priest Caiaphas in the tragedy of Jesus, and also agree that Jesus' opponents feared him. However, only John clearly states the historical circumstances of Caiaphas' fear. “The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said: ‘What are we to do? For this man [Jesus] performs many signs. If we let him go on thus, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.’ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them: ‘You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.’ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation” (Jn. 11:47–51).

It is not clear to what degree this report was molded by John or his source. Although Caiaphas' statement that if many believe in Jesus “the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation” may be late, it is well known that in Caiaphas' time prophecies of doom about the future destruction of the Temple already existed¹⁵; one of them was uttered by Jesus himself.

It is very probable that Caiaphas decided to act because he feared that Jesus' movement and its possible success among the people would cause violent Roman intervention. Caiaphas' anxiety was exaggerated but not unfounded. Roman military forces not only fought against Jewish rebels, but they also crushed any enthusiastic Jewish prophetic movement whose aim was the freedom of Israel. The leader of one such movement, Theudas, is mentioned in Acts 5:36. Josephus described his career: “He persuaded the majority of the masses to take up their possessions and follow him to the Jordan River. He stated that he was a prophet and that at his command the river would be parted and would provide them an easy passage.” Fadus “sent against them a squadron of cavalry...slew many of them”

and Theudas himself was executed by the Romans (*Antiquities* 20:97–99).

When Felix was the governor of Judea, “deceivers and impostors, under the pretence of divine inspiration fostering revolutionary changes, persuaded the multitude to act like madmen and led them out into the desert under the belief that God would there give them tokens of deliverance. Against them Felix, regarding this but the preliminary to insurrection, sent a body of cavalry and heavy armed infantry, and put a large number to the sword” (*War* 2:259–260). Felix anticipated the attack of a similar prophet of Egyptian origin, meeting him and his followers with Roman heavy infantry. “The outcome of the ensuing engagement was that the Egyptian escaped with a few of his followers; most of his forces were killed or taken prisoner” (*War* 2:261–263). Paul was later mistakenly taken for this Egyptian by a Roman tribune (*Acts* 21:38).

It is certainly possible Caiaphas' fear that Jesus' activities would lead to similar ends prompted him to arrest Jesus and deliver him to Pilate. However, in order to accomplish this, the high priest needed Jesus' confirmation that he believed himself to be the Messiah (*Mt.* 26:62–64; *Mk.* 14:61–62). Caiaphas did not receive an explicit confirmation in full, but Jesus' opponents accused him before Pilate: “We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king” (*Lk.* 23:2). Although Pilate evidently was not sure that Jesus was a rebel against Rome, he ordered an inscription to be put on the cross accusing Jesus of being “the king of the Jews” (*Mt.* 27:27; *Mk.* 15:26; *Lk.* 23:38 and *Jn.* 19:19).

Returning to the account in John 11:47–51, Caiaphas justified his awful decision by arguing that “it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish” (*Jn.* 11:50). I personally feel that Caiaphas was capable of arguing in that way: many politicians and rulers before and after Caiaphas have believed that real or assumed expediency outweighs any moral scruple. This way of reasoning and acting was and is without doubt contrary to the Jewish faith's humane approach¹⁶ — but a Sadducean high priest could disagree. **JP**

1. Two spellings of the name exist: “Caiaphas” and “Kaiaphas.” We have used the former, which

is common in English translations of the New Testament and in scholarly literature.

2. See D. Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem, 1988). About the trial see there: "The Crucified One and the Jews," pp. 575–587; "A Literary Approach to the Trial of Jesus," pp. 588–592; "What was the Original Meaning of *Ecce Homo*?" pp. 593–603; "Who Is It that Struck You?" (pp. 604–609). See also "Utilitas Crucis" in E. Bickermann, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, Part 3 (Leiden, 1978), pp. 82–138.

3. Concerning Caiaphas and his family see D. Barag and D. Flusser, "The Ossuary of Jehohanan Granddaughter of the High Priest Theophilus," *Israel Exploration Journal* 36 (1986), 39–44; D.R. Schwartz, *Agrippa I: The Last King of Judaea* (Tübingen, 1990), pp. 184–185; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 225–236; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, 1989), passim; B.-Z. Rosenfeld, "The Settlement of Two Families of High Priests during the Second Temple Period," *Historical-Geographical Studies in the Settlement of Eretz-Israel*, vol. 2, eds. Y. Katz, Y. Ben-Arieh, Y. Kaniel (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 206–218, especially 209–218 (Hebrew); M. Stern, "Herod's Policies and Jewish Society at the End of the Second Temple Period," *Tarbiz* 35 (1966), 235–253. Reprinted in

Studies in Jewish History: The Second Temple Period, eds. M. Amit, I. Gafni, M.D. Herr (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 190–198 (Hebrew).

4. There is no doubt that the original form of the name was *Kaiáφas* (*Kaiaphas*, Caiaphas), although there exists a variant, *Kaiφas* (*Kaiphos*, Caiphos), in the New Testament (see F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [Chicago, 1961], §37, p. 20). Josephus speaks about him as Joseph surnamed Caiaphas (*Antiq.* 18:35, 95). *Tosefta*, *Yevamot* 1:10, mentions the "house of Caiapha." Thus, as the "bar Cathros" inscription (see N. Avigad, "Excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, 1969–1971," in *Jerusalem Revealed* [Jerusalem, 1976], p. 49) shows, the name Caiapha designated all the members of the family. Therefore Joseph bar Caiapha is the same as Joseph Caiapha (Caiaphas). For examples of similar variants see M. Stern, p. 191 (n. 75) and p. 192 (n. 83).

5. See J. Liver, *Chapters in the History of Priests and Levites* (Jerusalem, 1968), p. 105 (Hebrew).

6. *Antiq.* 19:342, *Mishnah*, *Parah* 3:5 and 20:16, and see *Josephus*, ed. L.H. Feldman, vol. 9 (Cambridge, MA, 1965), pp. 398–399, n. b. According to *Mishnah*, *Parah* 3:5, this high priest belonged to the family of Caiaphas, while Josephus (*Antiq.*

The entrances of Loculi II (on the left) and I, in the west wall of the Caiaphas tomb.



19:342) speaks about "Elionaeus the son of Cantheras." The Cantheras family evidently is to be identified with the house of Cathros. Thus, there is a clear discrepancy between Josephus and the Mishnah, and scholars who believe both witnesses have no choice but to equate the two high-priestly families. However, one should take into account the possibility that Josephus erred by supposing that Elionaeus was the son of Joseph Cantheras. This is the opinion of M. Stern, p. 196 (for an example of a similar error, see *ibid.*, p. 194, n. 88). In any case, B.-Z. Rosenfeld rightly suggests (p. 218) that the rare name Elionaeus shows that he belonged to the famous priestly family of Pashhur. If Elionaeus was a member of the house of Caiaphas, then the origin of its other members, including Joseph Caiaphas, was Pashhur.

7. Concerning the rules affecting the marriage of the high priest see Jeremias, pp. 154–157. In 1984 the Israel Antiquities Authority acquired the ossuary of a member of Annas' family (see Barag and Flusser [above, n. 3]).

8. For the decisive influence of retired high priests, see Jeremias, p. 157.

9. See Jeremias, pp. 229–230. In Acts 4:1–2 we read about the arrest of the Apostles by "the priests...and the Sadducees." The latter were evidently identical with the men of the high-priestly family enumerated in Acts 4:6.

10. This conclusion is based mainly upon my interpretation of Acts 4:6.

11. If Joseph Caiaphas was indeed a descendant of Pashur (see n. 6 above), then there is an amazing parallel between the behavior of Pashur, who had the prophet Jeremiah arrested and beaten when he stood in the courtyard of the Temple and prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 19:14–20:6), and that of Pashur's descendant, Joseph Caiaphas, who had Jesus arrested for the same offense.

12. See Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (Berlin, 1961), pp. 125–126, and A.F.J. Klijn, "Scribes, Pharisees, High-Priests and Elders," *Novum Testamentum* 3 (1959), 259–267.

13. See *A Comparative Greek Concordance to the Synoptic Gospels*, ed. R.L. Lindsey, vol. 3, 1989 (Jerusalem, 1989), pp. 267–269.

14. See Seder Olam Rabbah, end chapter 3, and the so-called "Birkat ha-Minim" in the Eighteen Benedictions, and below, n. 16.

15. Compare Josephus, *War* 6:288–315, and Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai's prediction of the Temple's destruction in Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 39^b. According to the Talmud, ben Zakkai gave this prophecy forty years before the destruction of the Temple.

16. See Tosefta, Terumot 7:20. In such cases the Hassidic halachah did not permit any compromise. See W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Palästinensischen Amoräer*, vol. 1 (Strassburg, 1892); reprint published by G. Olms (Hildesheim, 1965), pp. 128, 188–189.

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Deciphering the Inscriptions

First-century cursive Hebrew can be difficult to read — even for experts in the epigraphy of the period. This is particularly true when letters merge into each other to form ligatures. Also, because many of the ossuary inscriptions presented in this issue were scratched into stone with a nail or similar clumsy instrument, the letters are not always well formed and the words are somewhat difficult to decipher. To help clarify some of the more obscure inscriptions, we have reprinted the examples below together with printed forms of the words, highlighting each individual letter.

The first word of the inscription יהוסף בר קיפא (ye-ho-SEF bar ka-ya-FA', Joseph bar Caiapha) found on the back face of Ossuary 6 (page 16).



The first word of the inscription יהוסף בר קיפא (ye-ho-SEF bar ka-ya-FA', Joseph bar Caiapha) found on the end of Ossuary 6 (page 13).



The last word of the inscription מרים בת שמעון (mir-YAM be-RAT shim-ON, Miriam daughter of Shim'on) found on Ossuary 8 (page 21).



Transliteration Key

Hebrew & Aramaic

Syllables of transliterated words are separated by dots. Capitalization is used to indicate the accented syllable in words of more than one syllable. See page 11 of the Nov/Dec 1989 issue for a full description of the transliteration system used in JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE.

Consonants

ס - ³ (silent)
ב - b
ו - v
ג - g
ד - d
ה - h (or silent)
ז - z
ח - h (voiceless guttural)

ט - t
י - y (or silent)
כ - k
ך - ² k (like ch in the Scottish loch)
ל - l
מ - m
נ - n
ס - s
ע - ^c (voiced guttural)
פ - p
ף - ^f f
צ - ^s ts (like ts in nets)
ק - k
ר - r
ש - sh
ס - s
ת - t
*The form of the letter at the end of a word.

Vowels

(The ס is used here as a point of reference.)

א - a (like a in father; rarely like o in bone)
א, א - a (like a in father)
א - e (like e in net, or e in hey, or somewhere in between)
א, א - e (like e in net)
א, א - i (like i in ski)
א, א, א - o (like o in bone)
א, א - u (like u in flu)
א - e (silent, or as short as e in happening, or as long as e in net)

Diphthongs

א - ai
א - oi
א - ui

Greek

Greek words are transliterated based on the Society of Biblical Literature system.

The middle word of the inscription מרים בת שמעון (mir-YAM be-RAT shim-ON, Miriam daughter of Shim'on) found on Ossuary 8 (page 21).



The second word of the inscription יהוסף בר קיפא (ye-ho-SEF bar ka-ya-FA', Joseph bar Caiapha) found on Ossuary 6 (page 16).



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